

NETC News

Naval Education and Training Command
Public Affairs Office (Code N00P)
250 Dallas Street
Pensacola, FL 32508-5220

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News Release #145-12

Aug 9, 2012

Contact: Steve Vanderwerff

850.452.9110
(DSN) 922.4858
(FAX) 850.452.4900

Building partnerships with Africa and beyond

Africa! Just the word brings to mind vivid images of dense jungle, wild animals, extreme heat and dramatic scenes of exotic native culture. Africa; the "cradle" of human civilization, home to more than one billion people speaking a surplus of 2,000 languages spread out over 12 million square miles of desert, savannah and tropical forest. Raw, mysterious and often dangerous, yes Africa is all this and more.

Unfortunately however, in recent years Africa has become more known for its extreme poverty, piracy, disease, civil unrest, strife and internal warfare. To help overcome their myriad of difficulties Naval Education and Training Security Assistance Field Activity (NETSAFA) in support of the United States Security Strategy assists partner nations develop effective and stable militaries.

In keeping with this goal, myself as lead instructor and instructor Aviation Electrician's Mate 1st Class James Ridgeway, made up a two-man Mobile Education and Training Team (MET) from the NETSAFA International Training Center (NITC) on board Naval Air Station Pensacola, were dispatched in June to the British training base called "The Horton Academy" in Freetown, capitol city of Sierra Leone. The mission was to train more than 30 of Sierra Leone

Armed Forces' most senior non commissioned officer's (NCO) and petty officers.

Land navigation, leadership and instructor training were a few of the wide range of topics we taught during three intense weeks of instruction. Students from army and naval commands throughout the country experienced the unique instruction.

What made the experience especially gratifying was that they were some of the best students I've ever taught. They were eager to learn and brought a lot of real combat experience and practical leadership skills to the table."

My partner, Petty Officer Ridgeway, was very impressed with the attitude of his students.

"These guys were very motivated to hear about our military and how we do business, especially how we lead our people," explained Ridgeway. "This was my first time training internationals, and it was a great experience. To see how these people operate without the funding and support that we're used to in the U.S. military was s amazing."

Later this summer, several hundred of Sierra Leone's forces will deploy to Somalia and Darfur as part of a United Nations (U.N.) peace keeping mission. Several students who attended the course will take part in the operation.

Because we knew about the upcoming peace keeping mission, we tailored the section covering International Professional Advanced Leadership (IPAL)

to their needs. This included relevant international legal issues such as, The Laws of Armed Conflict and Rules of Engagement.

As one senior NCO explained to me, "I feel that everything that was discussed in this course will be very valuable during our peace keeping missions that my country is scheduled to do in the future."

Our coming to Sierra Leone was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Sierra Leone. Before heading back to the U.S. we had the opportunity to meet with U.S. Ambassador Michael Owen who was pleased to hear that the training we provided was successful and will help Sierra Leone develop an effective and stable military, and strengthen our bond with them and our commitment to the region.

Now back in the U.S. I look forward to continuing NITC's mission of broadening its global impact on the international community by conducting training,, world-wide, or hosting students from dozens of partner countries for training at the schoolhouse onboard NAS Pensacola, Fla.

-USN-

Story by Paul Roarke, NITC

Paul is a retired Marine Master Gunnery Sergeant